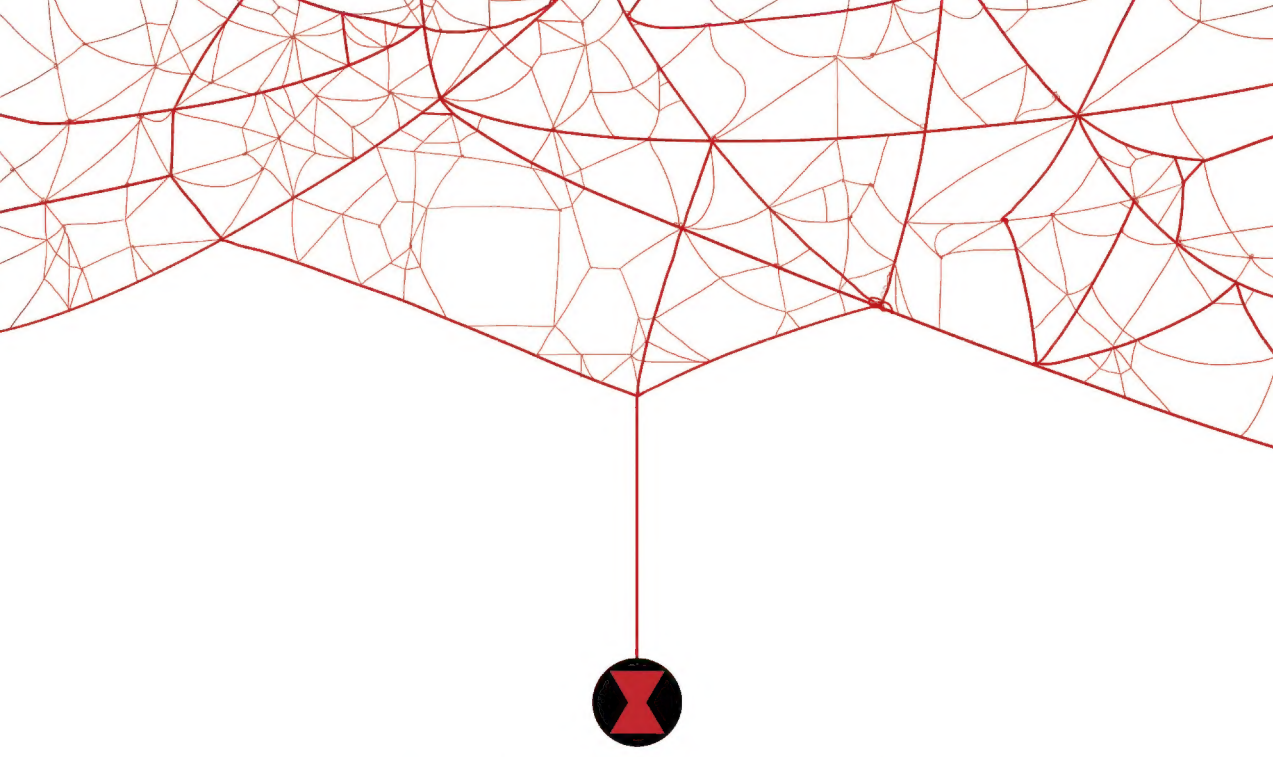
LAST DAYS OF
BLACK WIDOW
noto
EDMONDSON
NOTO
020
MARVEL
SECRET WARS



NATASHA ROMANOVA IS AN AVENGER, ~~AN AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D.~~ AND AN EX-KGB ASSASSIN, BUT ON HER OWN TIME SHE USES HER UNIQUE SKILL SET TO ATONE FOR HER PAST. SHE IS:

BLACK WIDOW

AFTER BRINGING DOWN THE TERRORIST ORGANIZATION CHAOS, NATASHA QUIT S.H.I.E.L.D. TO LIVE THE QUIET LIFE WITH HER CAT LIHO, HELPING THE AVENGERS ON AN AS-NEEDED BASIS. AND NEEDED SHE IS. THE AVENGERS RECRUITED NATASHA TO GATHER PEOPLE FOR A LAST-MINUTE SURVIVOR COLONY BEING ASSEMBLED AS THE END OF THE WORLD DRAWS NIGH, GIVING HER THE OPPORTUNITY TO ERASE SOME OF THE RED IN HER LEDGER...DEBTS SHE ACCRUED DURING HER RED ROOM DAYS YEARS AGO IN CUBA.

"JANUARY: PART TWO"

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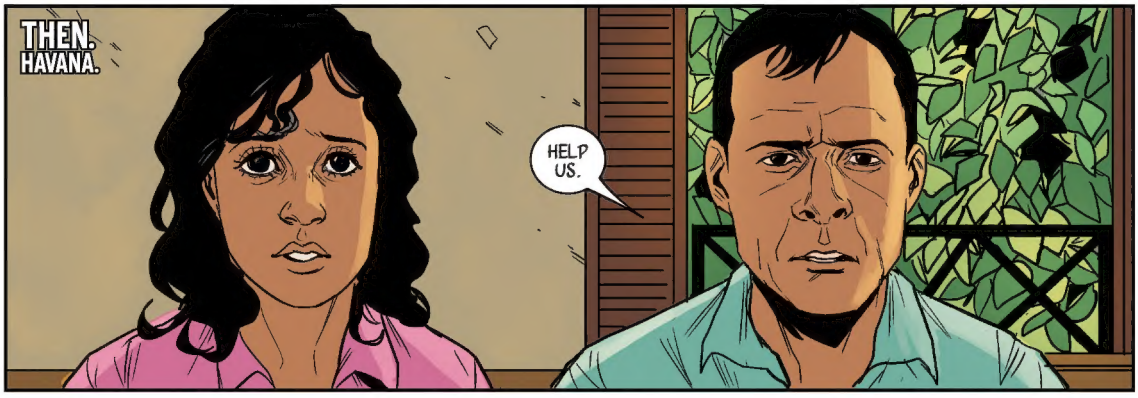
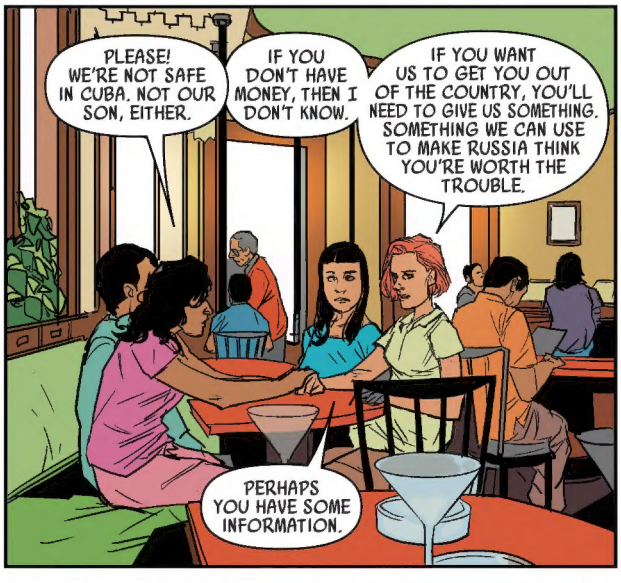
NOW.
THE WORLD IS ON FIRE.
SO WE RUSH INTO THE FLAMES.
HURRY! FIND A SEAT. MIND THE PRECIOUS CARGO!
WE SAVE THE SOULS THAT WE CAN.


THEN.
HAVANA.
HELP US.

THAT WILL BE EXPENSIVE. VERY EXPENSIVE.
WE DON'T HAVE MUCH SAVED.
THEN WE CAN'T HELP YOU.

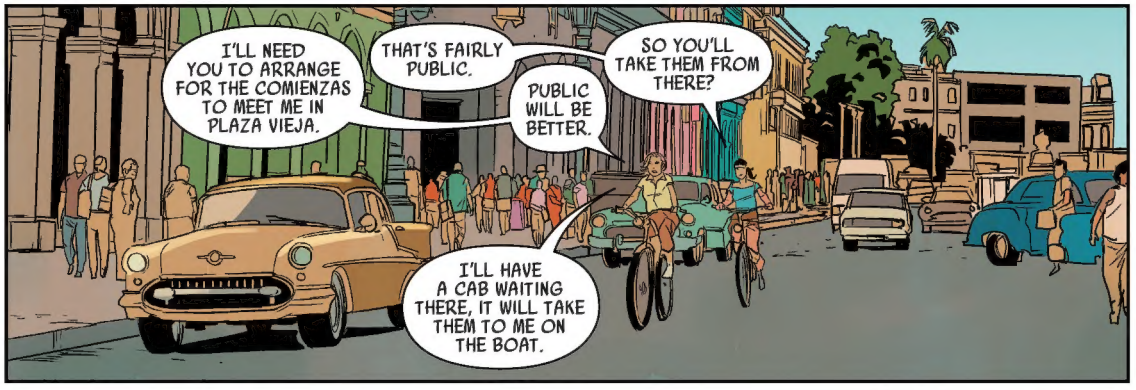

PLEASE! WE'RE NOT SAFE IN CUBA. NOT OUR SON, EITHER.
IF YOU DON'T HAVE MONEY, THEN I DON'T KNOW.
IF YOU WANT US TO GET YOU OUT OF THE COUNTRY, YOU'LL NEED TO GIVE US SOMETHING. SOMETHING WE CAN USE TO MAKE RUSSIA THINK YOU'RE WORTH THE TROUBLE.
PERHAPS YOU HAVE SOME INFORMATION.

WE CAN'T.
WE DON'T KNOW ANYTHING OF VALUE TO RUSSIA.
WHY DON'T YOU LET US DECIDE THAT?

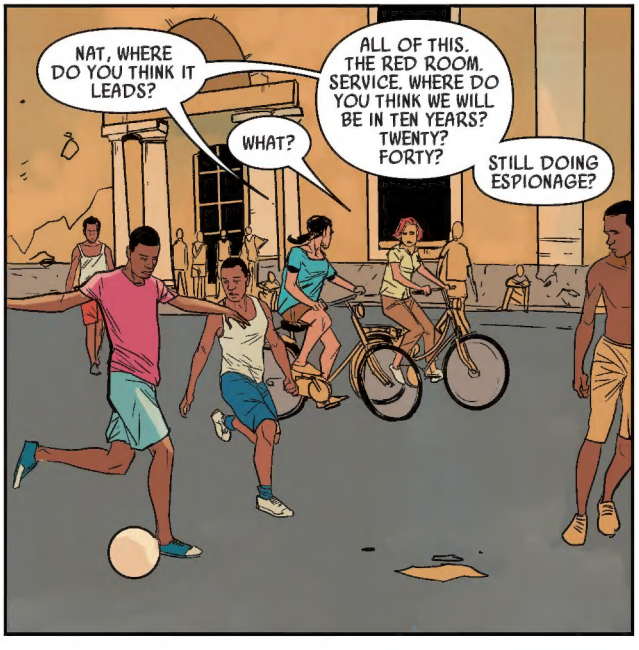
WE KNOW SOME THINGS. SOME THINGS DANGEROUS FOR CUBA.
WE CAN SHARE SENSITIVE INFORMATION IF YOU WILL HELP US GET OUT OF THE COUNTRY. WE WILL GIVE YOU ANYTHING.
WE JUST DON'T HAVE MONEY.

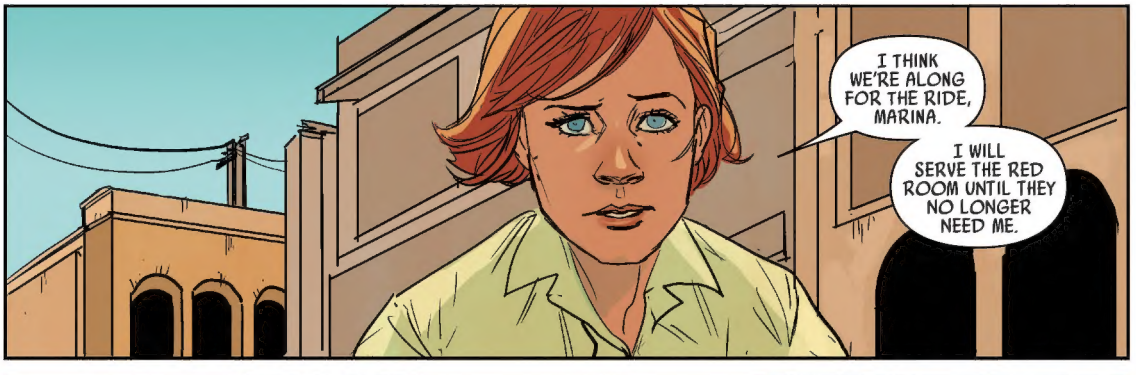
WRITE DOWN WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION.

THIS IS WHAT THEY FEARED.
THE RED ROOM IS DOING A FAVOR FOR CASTRO. THEY SUSPECTED THE COMIENZAS WERE AMONG SEVERAL WHO WISHED TO DEFECT WITH INFORMATION.
WE DON'T CARE ABOUT THE INFORMATION.
CASTRO JUST WANTS TO KNOW WHAT THE AMERICANS WERE AFTER.
SO, WE LEARN THAT, THEN WE KILL THE COMIENZAS.
OKAY.
MAKE IT PUBLIC. A STATEMENT.
OF COURSE, SIR. SHALL I KILL THE CHILD AS WELL?
WHAT? NO! LORD NO, NATASHA. CASTRO DOESN'T WISH TO BE SEEN AS A MONSTER.
IS MARINA TO ASSIST?
CERTAINLY NOT.


I'LL NEED YOU TO ARRANGE FOR THE COMIENZAS TO MEET ME IN PLAZA VIEJA.
THAT'S FAIRLY PUBLIC.
PUBLIC WILL BE BETTER.
SO YOU'LL TAKE THEM FROM THERE?
I'LL HAVE A CAB WAITING THERE, IT WILL TAKE THEM TO ME ON THE BOAT.

I'LL BRING THEM--
NO. BETTER IF YOU SEND THEM. YOU AND I CANNOT RISK EXPOSURE.
OKAY... RIGHT, SURE.

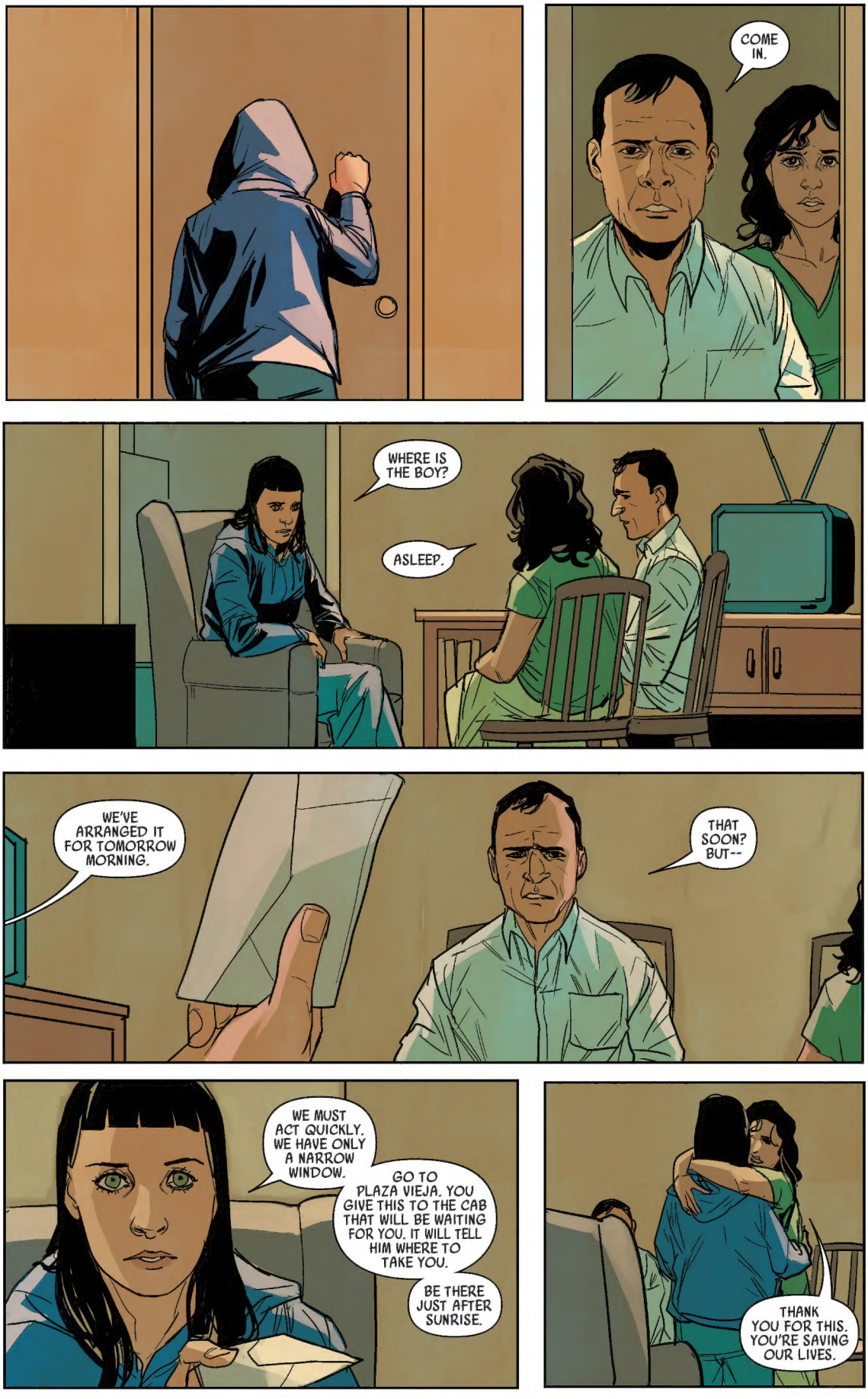

NAT, WHERE DO YOU THINK IT LEADS?
WHAT?
ALL OF THIS. THE RED ROOM. SERVICE. WHERE DO YOU THINK WE WILL BE IN TEN YEARS? TWENTY? FORTY?
STILL DOING ESPIONAGE?


I THINK WE'RE ALONG FOR THE RIDE, MARINA.
I WILL SERVE THE RED ROOM UNTIL THEY NO LONGER NEED ME.

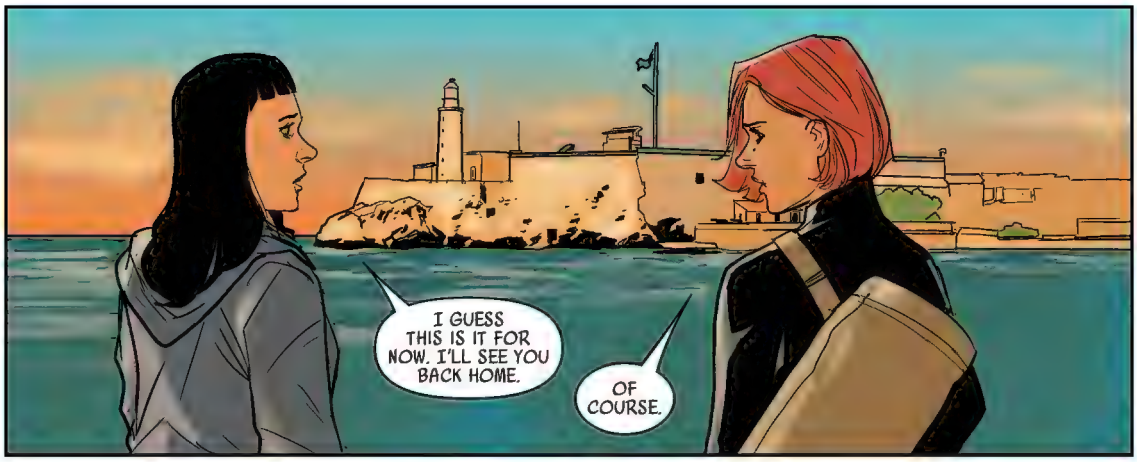
MAYBE WE DON'T WANT TO BE. MAYBE WE WANT TO PEDAL...TO STEER.
I JUST...

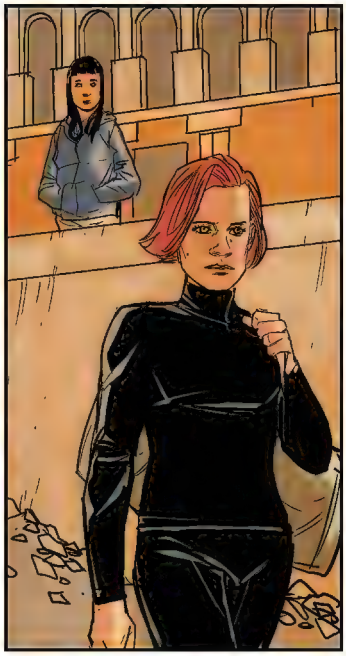
...YOU USED TO BE ON THE OUTSIDE.
LIKE YOU NEVER WANTED TO BE PART OF SOMETHING SOMEONE ELSE WOULD TELL YOU.
BUT NOW--
WE ALL HAVE TO GROW UP, MARINA.
NOT IN HAVANA WE DON'T.
HELLO, DARLING.
HOLA, MI AMOR.
LUIS SHALL CATCH US SOME FISH TOMORROW MORNING FOR *PESCADOS ASADO*, HIS ***SPECIALTY***. YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS IT.

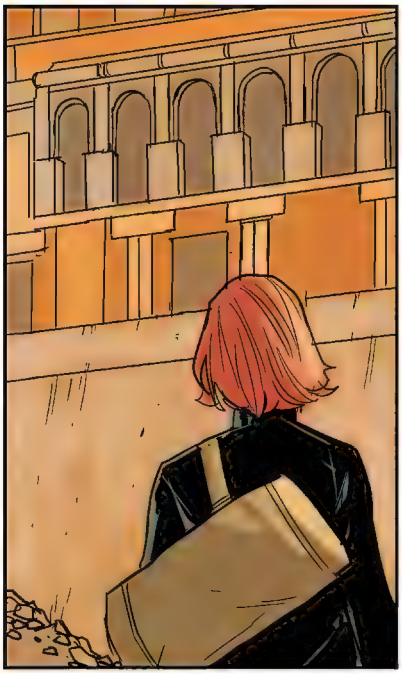
LATER.

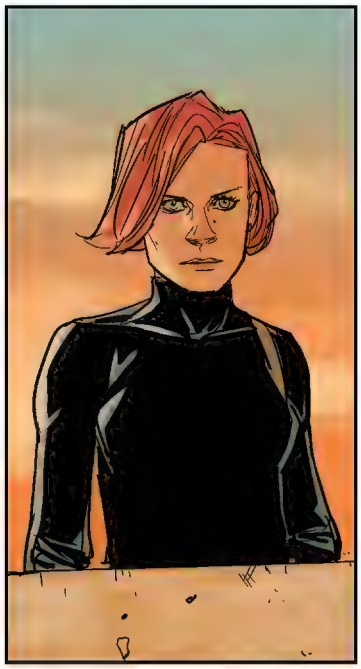

COME IN.
WHERE IS THE BOY?
ASLEEP.
WE'VE ARRANGED IT FOR TOMORROW MORNING.
THAT SOON? BUT--
WE MUST ACT QUICKLY. WE HAVE ONLY A NARROW WINDOW.
GO TO PLAZA VIEJA. YOU GIVE THIS TO THE CAB THAT WILL BE WAITING FOR YOU. IT WILL TELL HIM WHERE TO TAKE YOU.
BE THERE JUST AFTER SUNRISE.
THANK YOU FOR THIS. YOU'RE SAVING OUR LIVES.

IT'S DONE?
THEY'LL BE THERE.
I CAN'T SAY THAT I UNDERSTAND WHY THE RED ROOM IS RESCUING PEOPLE FROM CASTRO.
BUT WE MUST SERVE EVEN WHEN WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND.
NO, MARINA, WE ARE AGENTS AND WE HAVE MADE A CHOICE.
WE *SERVE*, BUT WE ARE NOT PUPPETS.
FOR THE NERVES.
NO, THANK YOU.
AH, YES. BRAVE NAT DOESN'T GET NERVOUS.
I DO, MARINA. I CERTAINLY DO.

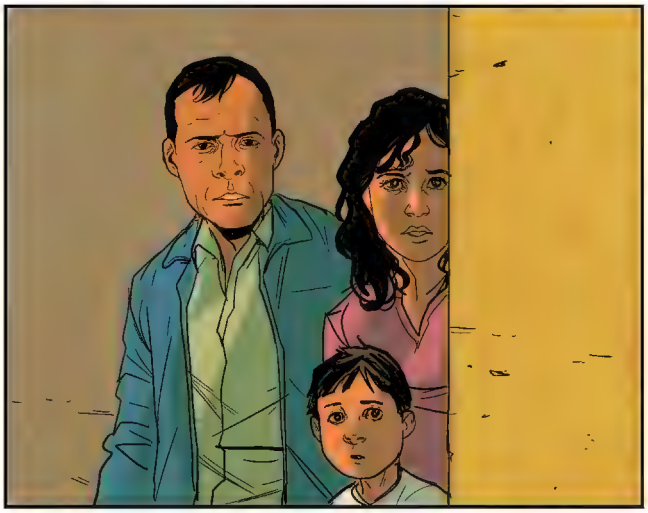

I GUESS THIS IS IT FOR NOW. I'LL SEE YOU BACK HOME.
OF COURSE.





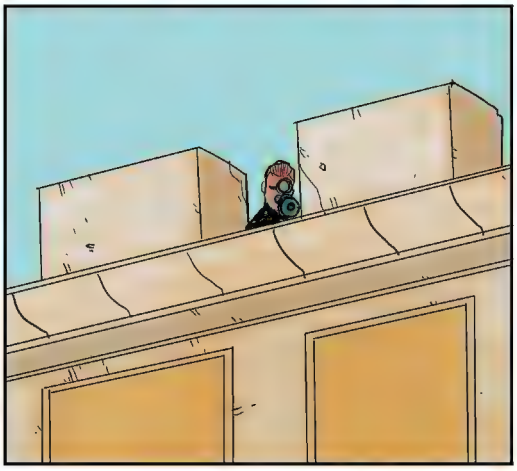


PLAZA VIEJA.
JUST AFTER SUNRISE.



IS IT SAFE?
JUST GET ACROSS AND WE'LL BE FINE. ACT NATURAL.

I DON'T SEE THE CAB.
IT'S OVER THERE SOMEWHERE. KEEP MOVING.

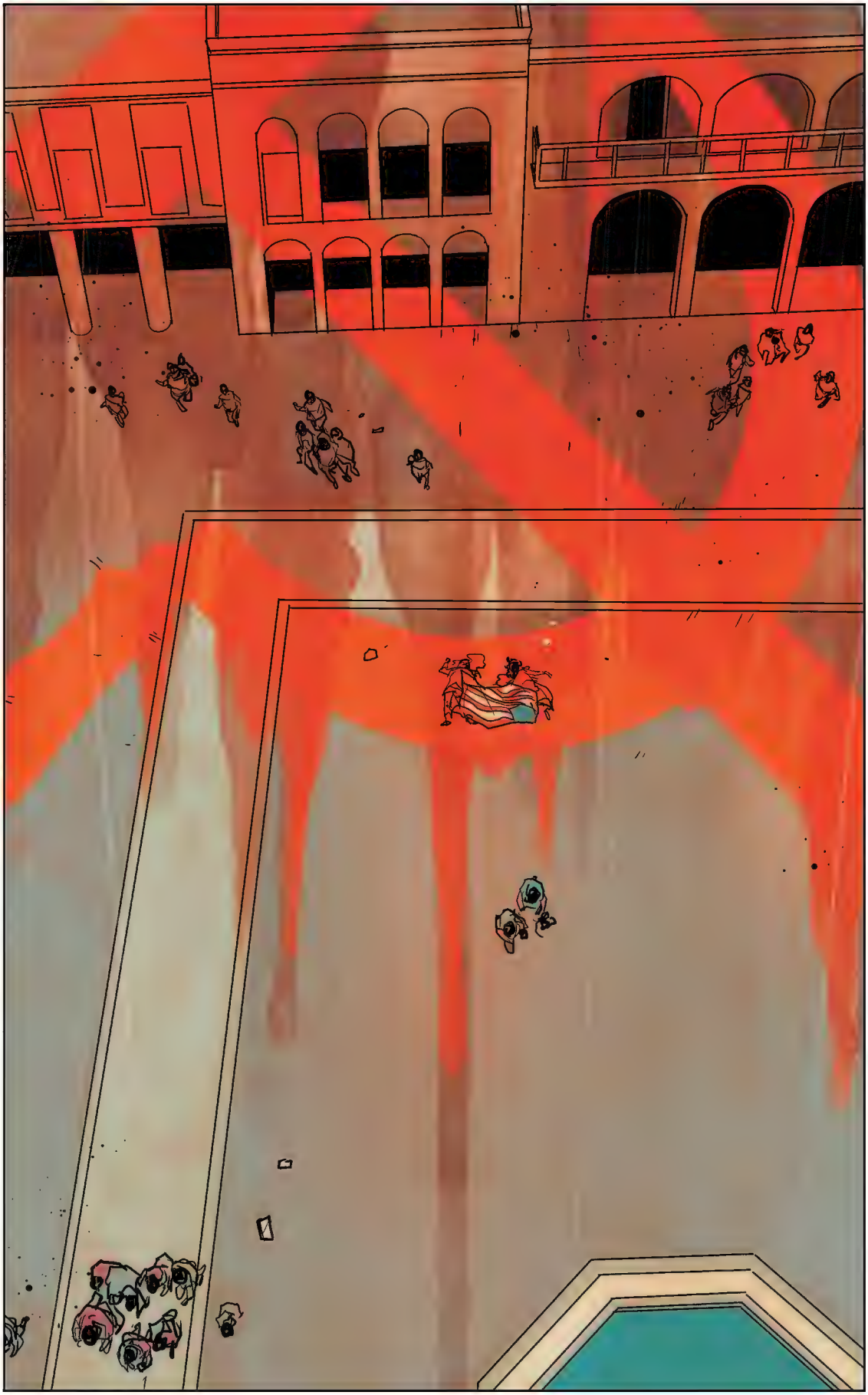


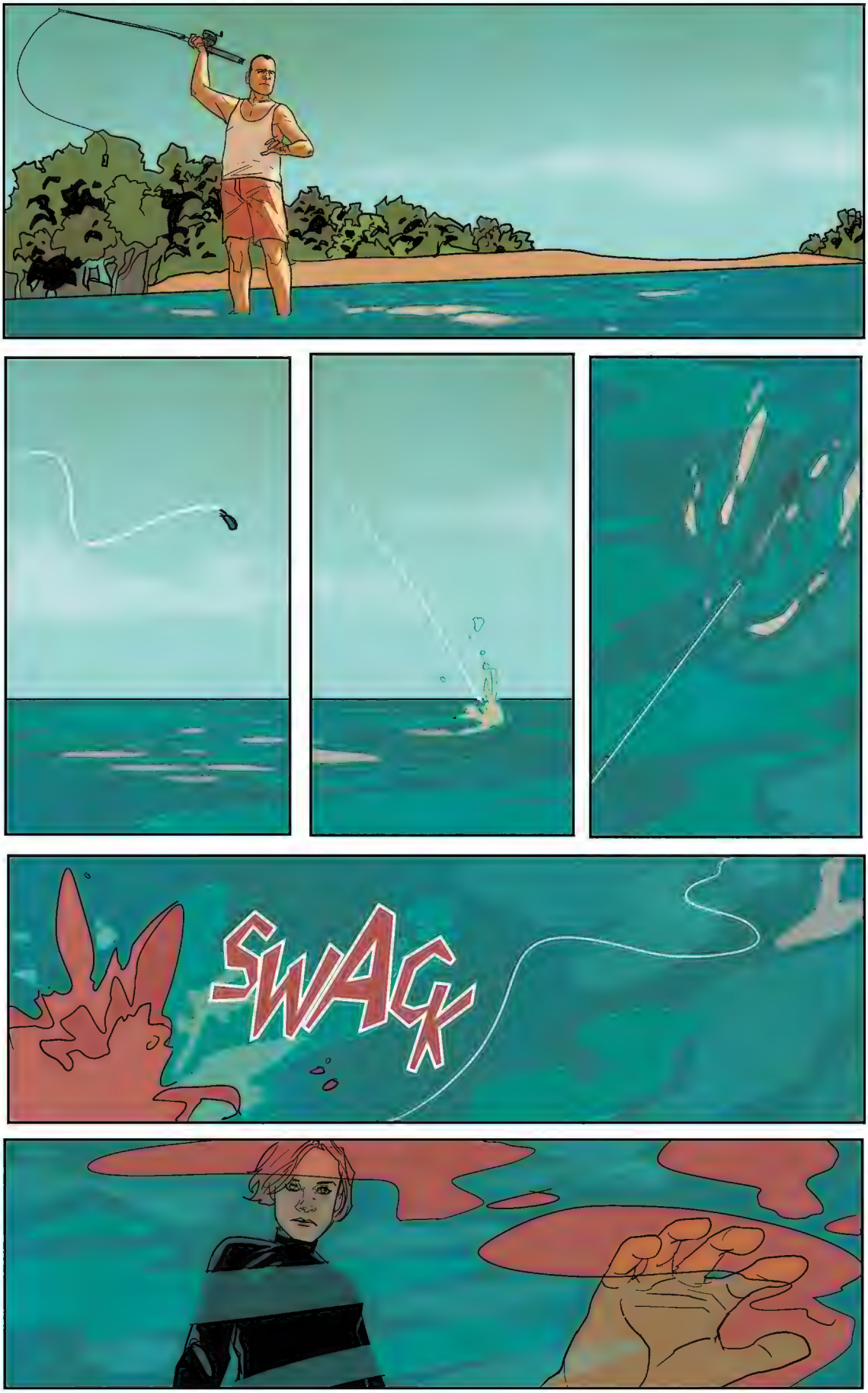
SWACK

JEMA!

WHAT--

SWACK

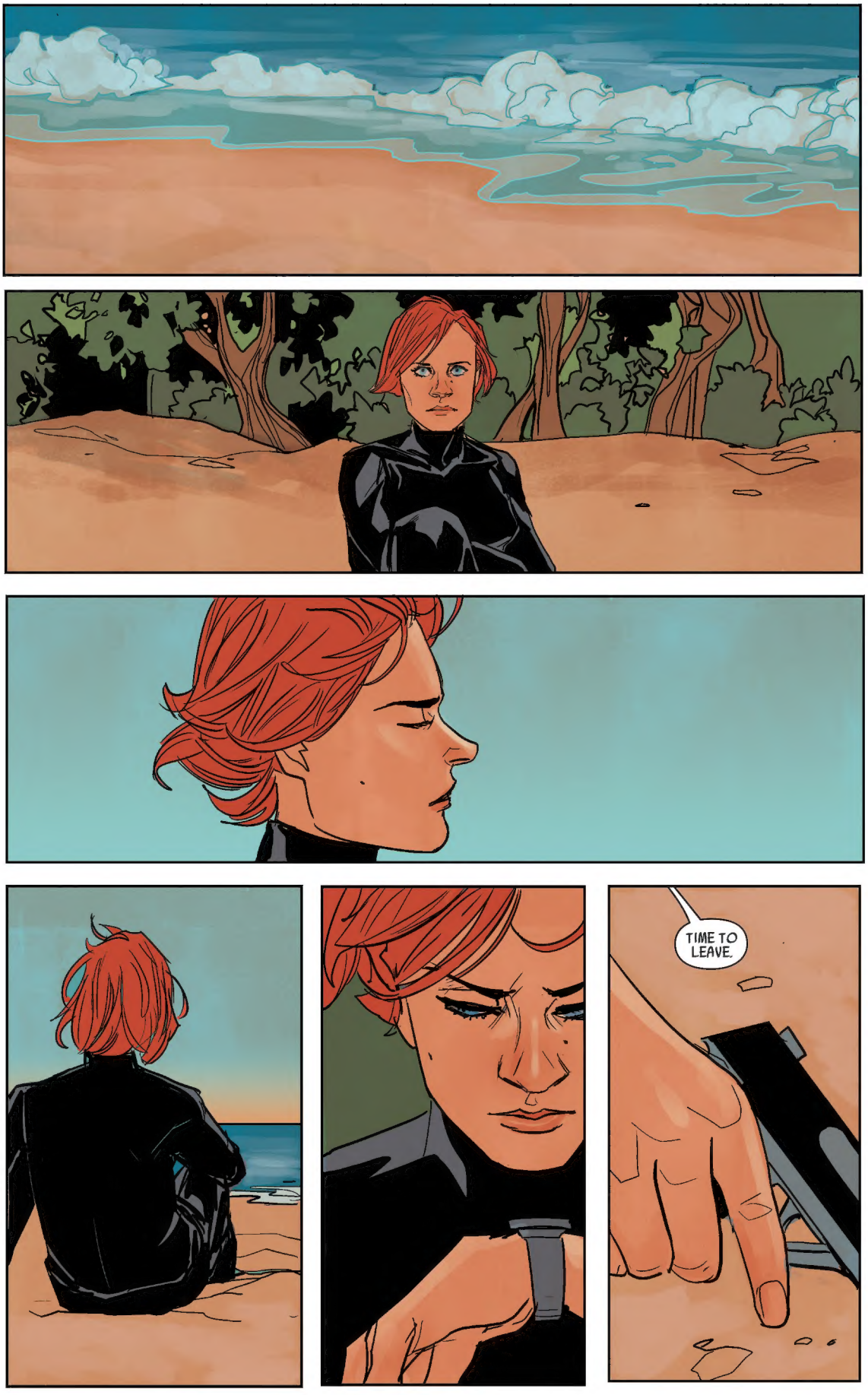


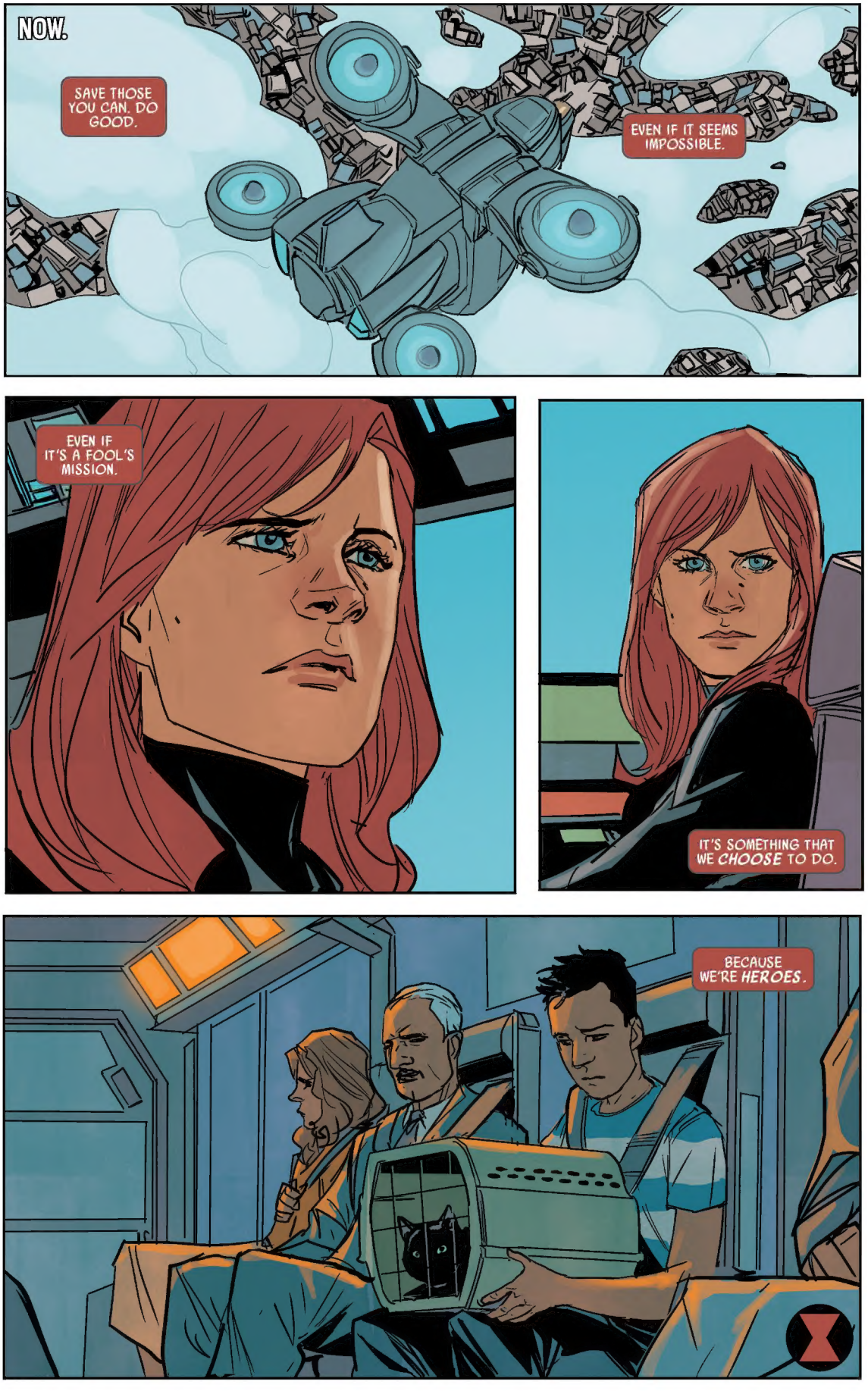

SWAG

MARINA?
MARINA?
HISSSSSS

SWACK
6

MEOW.
SWACK!


TIME TO LEAVE.


NOW.
SAVE THOSE YOU CAN. DO GOOD.
EVEN IF IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE.
EVEN IF IT'S A FOOL'S MISSION.
IT'S SOMETHING THAT WE CHOOSE TO DO.
BECAUSE WE'RE HEROES.

TO RUSSIAN, WITH LOVE...

JAKE THOMAS editor
AXEL ALONSO editor in chief
JOE QUESADA chief creative officer
DAN BUCKLEY publisher
ALAN FINE exec. producer

DEAR READERS!

We're at the end of a 20-issue run, and it feels great, but it's all meaningless without you all being part of the team.

At Marvel they keep telling me that we've done something really special, which is always a surprise to hear. Not because I'm not extraordinarily proud of the book, not because it hasn't been a real and thrilling adventure and not because I'm unaware that we've offered real story and character to the Marvel Comics canon. Simply because for me I just showed up to work and tried my best not to screw it up.

Still, it's hard to ignore the tweets, the cosplay, the blog posts, the accidental Iggy Azalea Google Alerts. And this resonated with our team at Marvel.

When those at Marvel and our readership tell us this book is special, I don't think they're just talking about title longevity and sales numbers. I think we're talking about an experience we've shared with Natasha, all of us together. I know she's affected me. I've identified with her journey and I've been inspired by her strength. Everyone who's cracked these books is captivated by the art, and literally drawn into her secrets and trials by Phil's visceral art, in which we've all found something we treasure.

Speaking of Phil, let me say: brother, it's been a real and inspiring pleasure. I know we were perfect together on this book because we didn't have to discuss process for the entirety of 20 issues. We shared story ideas, then you knew how to make the best of what I wrote and I figured out how little you needed in descriptions to make it all work. You're a genius and comics is lucky to have you. Whatever book you're illustrating, whatever story you're telling, you know I'll be there as your biggest fan.

One kid, two houses and over two years ago, Axel called with this arranged marriage and he correctly, I think, foresaw the opportunity for great chemistry on this book. He's the first of four editors who were appropriately hands-off to the whole endeavor to allow Phil and me room to tell the story we saw in our heads. And yet, starting with the wonderfully visionary Ellie Pyle, and then guided by foxhole brother Jake Thomas, all under the "That makes NO sense at all" purview of Tom Brevoort, and not forgetting our letterer supreme, Clayton Cowles, this was undeniably a team effort.

Twenty issues of anything is a real victory, and you, our readers, have made irrefutably clear to our team that BLACK WIDOW is truly special.

Let's be clear: this isn't a breakup letter. None of us on Team Nat wants for this lovely relationship we've built with you to end. In fact, we want to take it to the next level. So let's try some new books together.

But if we've learned anything from Natasha in these 20 issues, it's that we can't be afraid to move on. So let's move on, and I'll see you on the other side, with another character between us.

Best regards from L.A.
Nathan